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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0027
RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA 0008
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST 0043
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0005
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0003
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0301
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0022
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0035
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0183
RUEANFA/NRC WASHDC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 YEREVAN 000366

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC, EUR/PRA, ISN/RA, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2016

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [RS](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: RATHER THAN DISINVITE IRAN, ARMENIA SET TO CANCEL
NUCLEAR CONFERENCE

REF: A) STATE 31059 B) YEREVAN 353

Classified By: Amb. John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) President Robert Kocharian has ordered Armenian organizers of the 12th Annual Forum of State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors to "find technical reasons" to withdraw as host of the conference, Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian told the Ambassador March 14. The GOAM's decision would likely set the stage for Russia, the next in line to chair the forum, to host the event, address Iran's participation, and possibly revoke the invitation. Armenian officials have told us Russia opposes Iranian participation, either as an observer or member of the Forum. End Summary.

ARMENIA: LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT

¶2. (C) Rather than single out Iran for exclusion as we requested (reftels), the GOAM plans to "find technical reasons" to withdraw as host of the 12th Annual Forum of State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors scheduled for June 27-29 in Yerevan, according to Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian. Kirakossian told the Ambassador that Armenia had few other options considering Finland had already delivered invitations to Iran, China and India (para 6).

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

¶3. (C) Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Authority Chairman and GOAM-designated host of the 12th Annual VVER Forum Ashot Martirosyan told us March 14 that the MFA had not yet notified him of the results of their March 10 meeting (ref B) and had not instructed him to cancel the event. Assuming Armenia would not host the conference (the decision

Martirosyan speculated Kirakossian was likely to make following their meeting on March 13), Martirosyan said, his next steps would be to contact his counterpart in Moscow to inquire about Russia's interest in hosting the conference. Martirosyan said he would provide us further details if, or when, the instruction came to him from the MFA.

U.S.-RUSSIA PRIORITIES ALIGNED?

¶4. (C) According to Kirakossian, Armenia's decision to withdraw from hosting the conference would set the stage for Russia, the next in line to chair the forum, to host the conference, address Iran's participation, and possibly revoke the invitation. Kirakossian told the Ambassador that Russia had already expressed its concern about Iran's participation.

COMMENT: BALANCING RELATIONS WITH THE US, RUSSIA AND IRAN

¶5. (C) This is a purely political decision for the Armenians. If, as our interlocutors assert, Russia opposes Iranian participation in the VVER Forum, a GOAM decision to refer the matter to Moscow would serve our interests (reftels). The GOAM may well find technical reasons to withdraw from hosting the VVER Forum -- a compromise which would allow officials to avoid upsetting the balance of relations they are trying to achieve.

TEXT OF FINNISH LETTER INVITING IRANIAN PARTICIPATION

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¶6. (C) Begin text of English-language letter. (Note: By March 14, Martirosyan said he had not received a response to the invitation from his Iranian counterpart. End Note.)

January 5, 2006

Dr. Mr. Khalili-Pour,

I write You in the role of the chairman of Forum of the State Nuclear Safety Authorities of the Countries Operating VVER Type Reactors.

In the latest meeting of the Forum that was held in Finland in July 2005 we decided unanimously to invite You to join the Forum as a new member. Same invitation is sent to the regulatory heads of all those countries that are currently constructing VVER type reactors: China, India, and Iran. It is my honour to present the invitation to You with this letter.

The Forum was established in 1993 by a mutual agreement between the heads of the nuclear regulatory bodies of all countries that operate VVER type reactors. Its main objective is to exchange information on nuclear safety issues that are specific for VVER type reactors. Forum meets once a year and the meetings are organized in rotating order in member states. The chairmanship follows the same order.

It is common practice that the regulatory body heads attend the annual meetings. Some of them also bring one or two members of their staff to the meetings. The discussions are held in English with simultaneous translation to Russian.

Forum has typically three working groups that are agreed and set up each year in the annual meetings. A WG may work for one or several years, depending on its topic and need to continue. The current working groups are WG on Regulatory Use of PSA, WG on Evaluation of Operating Experience of VVER Regulators, and WG on Digital I and C Systems.

You will get an idea on the recent activities of the Forum in the enclosed minutes of the latest annual meeting and on the presentations made by the three working groups. If You need more information, I would be glad to answer Your questions.

The next meeting of Forum will be held in Armenia on 27-29 June 2006.

If You accept the invitation to join the Forum, You may kindly communicate Your decision and Your possible intention to participate to the next meeting to me and to Mr. Ashot Martirosyan who is the next host and Forum chairman. His e-mail address is A.Martirosyan@anra.am.

Best regards,

Jukka Laaksonen
Director General
STUK, Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority in Finland

End text of letter.
EVANS